Definition of "Hasan Sahih" According to At-Tirmidhi

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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أمَّا بعد:

Know, may you be guided to righteousness, that among **the greatest blessings** and most significant favors is the blessing of knowledge, which removes doubt, dispels weakness, reveals the truth to those with hearts, and leads the servant to what is sought.

Virtues of The Science Of Hadith

Indeed, the knowledge of Hadith is one of the **most honorable and significant sciences**, through which the religion is preserved and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ is protected from distortion and alteration. The scholars of Hadith have held a high status throughout the ages, as they are the bearers of the revelation and the guardians of the Shariah. They deserve the praise of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

The Hafidh Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his Tafsir regarding Allah's statement, "The Day We will call every people with their Imam" (Al-Isra: 71), that Allah informs us about the Day of Judgment, when He will hold every nation accountable through its Imam. The scholars differ in their interpretation of "Imam" here. Mujahid and Qatada said that it refers to their Prophet, as in Allah's saying: "For every nation, there is a messenger. And when their messenger comes, it will be judged between them with justice" (Yunus: 47).

Some of the Salaf said that this is **the greatest honor for the people of Hadith**, because **their Imam is the Prophet** ﷺ. They are the closest people to his Sunnah and the most knowledgeable of his teachings.

For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ prayed for goodness and radiance for those who engage in the science of Hadith, in both narration, transmission, and jurisprudence, saying: "**May Allah brighten the face of the one who hears a Hadith from us, memorizes it, and then conveys it. How many a person who carries knowledge to one who understands it better, and how many a person who carries knowledge but is not a scholar of it**" *(Narrated by Abu Dawood (3660), Tirmidhi (2656), and Ahmad (21590) with slight variations).*

Imam Sufyan al-Thawri (may Allah have mercy on him) was reported to have said: "**I do not know a science more virtuous than the science of Hadith, for those who seek the face of Allah. People need it even for their food and drink, and it is better than voluntary prayer and fasting because it is a communal obligation**" *(Sharh al-Sunnah by al-Baghawi – Vol 1, p. 279)*

The importance of Hadith is such that some of the Salaf considered studying it to be more virtuous than reciting the Quran. It has been narrated from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: "**Studying Hadith is better than reading the Quran**" *(See its source in Al-Madkhal by al-Bayhaqi – p. 307).*

Another indication of the high status of the people of Hadith and their esteemed position in the sight of Allah is that the people of innovation hate and oppose them. As Ja'far ibn Sinan al-Wasiti (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "**I heard Ahmad ibn Sinan say: 'There is no innovator in the world except that he hates the people of Hadith, and when a person innovates, the sweetness of Hadith is removed from his heart.'**" *(Ma'rifat 'Uloom al-Hadith – p. 4).*

If the science of Hadith holds such a lofty status, it is incumbent upon the seeker of knowledge to give it due attention in study, understanding, memorization, and transmission, so that he may be among those who carry this light and fulfill the trust that Allah has entrusted to the scholars, in accordance with His statement: "Indeed, We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed, We will be its guardian" (Al-Hijr: 9).

Indeed, the science of Hadith is one of the noblest of the Shar'i sciences, through which the Sunnah is preserved and the authentic is distinguished from the weak. The Hadith scholars have made great efforts in establishing precise criteria for accepting and rejecting narrations, and thus terminology emerged to indicate the various levels of Hadith, whether authentic or weak. Imam Abu Isa at-Tirmidhi (may Allah have mercy on him) had a specific terminology for classification and improvement, one of the most famous terms he used in his Jami' was "Hasan Sahih", a term he uniquely used.

The scholars have discussed the meaning of this term in detail, questioning whether it refers to combining the descriptions of good (Hasan) and authentic (Sahih) in a single Hadith, or if it signifies two separate classifications, and how it relates to the methodologies of other Hadith scholars.

In this article, we aim to clarify the meaning of the term "Hasan Sahih" according to Imam at-Tirmidhi, based on the statements and explanations of scholars, and outline the implications it carries in terms of rulings. May Allah help us in this endeavor.

We ask Allah to make this work sincere for His face and to benefit the Muslims through it. Verily, He is the One who is capable of doing so.

Definition of Sahih Hadith

A **Sahih Hadith** is a narration that has been transmitted with an unbroken chain of trustworthy and precise narrators, free from any **shudhudh** (irregularity) or **'illah qadiha** (hidden defect that undermines its authenticity). This means the Hadith has reached us through a chain of reliable transmitters, making it a dependable source for rulings, beliefs, and other matters of Shariah.

Foundations of a Sahih Hadith

For a Hadith to be classified as **Sahih**, it must meet a set of precise conditions established by the scholars of Hadith:

1. **Unbroken Chain of Transmission (Ittisal as-Sanad)**
    - Every narrator in the chain must have directly received the Hadith from the one above him.
    - Any gap, such as a missing narrator, results in the Hadith being classified differently (e.g., **Mu'allaq**, **Mursal**, or **Munqati'**), rather than **Sahih**.
2. **Integrity of the Narrators (Adalah ar-Ruwat)**
    - The narrators must be **Muslim, sane, mature, sound in belief, and free from major sins or dishonorable conduct**.
    - A narrator known for lying or misconduct is not considered reliable in transmitting Hadith.
3. **Precision and Accuracy (Dabt wa Itqan)**
    - The narrator must have a strong memory or preserve the narration accurately in writing.
    - **Dabt as-Sadr**: Memorizing Hadith precisely.
    - **Dabt al-Kitab**: Recording and preserving Hadith without error or alteration.
4. **Absence of Irregularity (Adam al-Shudhudh)**
    - The Hadith must not contradict stronger narrations from more reliable transmitters.
    - If a **trustworthy narrator opposes a more reliable group**, his narration is considered **Shadh (irregular)** and is not accepted.
5. **Freedom from Hidden Defects (Adam al-'Illah al-Qadiha)**
    - A hidden flaw that affects the Hadith's authenticity, despite it appearing sound on the surface, disqualifies it from being **Sahih**.
    - These defects are often identified only by expert Hadith scholars with deep knowledge of narrators and chains.

Categories of Sahih Hadith

Sahih Hadith is divided into two main types:

- **Sahih li Dhatihi (Intrinsically Authentic)**
    - A Hadith that meets **all five conditions** without needing additional supporting narrations.
    - This is the **highest level of Hadith** in terms of authenticity.
- **Sahih li Ghayrihi (Authentic Due to External Support)**
    - A Hadith that does not fully meet the highest standard but is strengthened by **multiple corroborating chains**.

The Status of Sahih Hadith as a Shar'i Evidence

Sahih Hadith holds a **high rank in Shar'i sources of legislation** since it is **part of Wahy (Revelation) from Allah** to His Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, it serves as **evidence** in Islamic rulings and is a foundation for legal judgments. Scholars have meticulously distinguished **Sahih Hadith from weak ones** and compiled dedicated collections ranking Hadith by authenticity. Among the most famous compilations are **Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim**.

Definition of Hasan Hadith

A **Hasan Hadith** is a narration that meets the conditions of a **Sahih Hadith**, except for the requirement of **perfect precision (Dabt Mutqin)**. Instead, the narrator is of **moderate accuracy** rather than being highly proficient in memory and precision. Hence, the Hasan Hadith is defined as:

"A Hadith with a connected chain, narrated by a reliable transmitter with slight weakness in precision, without any irregularity (Shudhudh) or hidden defect (‘Illah Qadiha)."

This means that a **Hasan Hadith** shares the **justice (‘Adalah) of narrators** and **chain continuity (Ittisal as-Sanad)** with **Sahih Hadith**, but differs in the **degree of precision (Dabt)**, as at least one of its narrators has **moderate retention**, meaning they are truthful but not at the level of the highly precise scholars of Hadith.

Conditions for a Hadith to Be Hasan

For a Hadith to be classified as **Hasan**, it must meet the following conditions:

1. **Unbroken Chain of Transmission (Ittisal as-Sanad)**
    - Every narrator must have directly received the Hadith from their teacher, with no **missing links**.
2. **Reliability of the Narrators (‘Adalah ar-Ruwat)**
    - All narrators in the chain must be **trustworthy Muslims**, free from **major sins and dishonorable conduct**.
3. **Moderate Precision in Narration (Dabt Khafif)**
    - While complete accuracy is **not required**, the narrator must be known for **truthfulness**, even if their memory is slightly weak.
    - This means the narrator is not **highly precise (Mutqin)** but is also not **prone to frequent mistakes**.
4. **Absence of Irregularity (Adam al-Shudhudh)**
    - The Hadith **must not** contradict a stronger narration from a more reliable transmitter.
5. **Absence of a Hidden Defect (Adam al-‘Illah al-Qadiha)**
    - There should be no **hidden weakness** that undermines the authenticity of the Hadith.

Types of Hasan Hadith

Scholars divide **Hasan Hadith** into two main categories:

- **Hasan Li Dhatihi (Intrinsically Hasan)**
    - A Hadith that **meets all the above conditions** without needing external support.
    - This is **stronger** than Hasan Li Ghayrihi.
- **Hasan Li Ghayrihi (Hasan Due to External Support)**
    - A Hadith that **does not** fully meet the conditions of **Hasan Li Dhatihi**.
    - However, due to **multiple chains supporting it**, the Hadith is elevated to **Hasan status**.

The Status of Hasan Hadith in Islamic Rulings

A **Hasan Hadith** is **accepted** in deriving Islamic rulings and is a **valid source** in Fiqh. However, it is **ranked below Sahih Hadith**. Scholars use **Hasan Hadith** when no **Sahih Hadith** exists on the same topic.

Difference Between Sahih and Hasan Hadith

The primary **difference** between a **Hasan Hadith** and a **Sahih Hadith** lies in **precision (Dabt)**:

- **Sahih Hadith**: All narrators are **highly accurate (Mutqin)**.
- **Hasan Hadith**: At least **one** narrator has **moderate accuracy (Khafif al-Dabt)**.

It is **not necessary** for every level of the chain to have a **moderate narrator**—it is sufficient if there is **at least one** such narrator anywhere in the chain.

A **Hasan narrator** is often described as **Saduq** (truthful but not fully precise), as mentioned by **Ibn Hajar** in *Taqrib al-Tahdhib*.

Preference of Sahih Hadith Over Hasan Hadith in Conflicts

Some may wonder why distinguishing between **Sahih** and **Hasan** Hadith matters when **both are accepted**. The distinction becomes critical **when there is a contradiction** between narrations:

- If a **Sahih Hadith** and a **Hasan Hadith conflict**,
    - The **Sahih Hadith is prioritized** due to its **stronger precision**.
- If there is **no contradiction**,
    - A **Hasan Hadith** is **fully accepted** as evidence.

Al-Tirmidhi's Definition of Hasan Hadith

Scholars have analyzed Imam **al-Tirmidhi's** definition of **Hasan Hadith**, which was famously transmitted by **Ibn al-Salah**, who stated:

"We have narrated from al-Tirmidhi that a Hasan Hadith is: A Hadith whose chain does not contain a narrator accused of lying, is not irregular (Shadh) and has been narrated through multiple routes."

However, this definition has been debated because **its direct source is unclear**. **Ibn Kathir** questioned it, stating:

"If this was narrated from al-Tirmidhi, then in which of his books did he state it? What is its chain of transmission? If it was inferred from his methodology, then it is incorrect, for he often says: 'This Hadith is Hasan Gharib, and we do not know it except from this chain.'"

Nonetheless, after further research, it was found that this definition **does exist** in *'Ilal al-Tirmidhi*, which is printed at the end of *Jami' al-Tirmidhi*. **Ibn Rajab** referenced it in his explanation of *Jami' al-Tirmidhi*, confirming that **Ibn Kathir's objection** is no longer valid.

Conditions of Hasan Hadith According to Al-Tirmidhi

Based on **Ibn al-Salah's transmission**, **al-Tirmidhi** set **three conditions** for **Hasan Hadith**:

1. **The chain must not contain a narrator accused of lying.**
2. **The Hadith must not be irregular (Shadh).**
3. **It must have multiple chains of transmission.**

However, this definition faced **several critiques**:

- **A narrator's lack of accusation for lying does not automatically make the Hadith Hasan.**
    - A Hadith may still be weak due to **broken chains (Inqita')** or **poor memory (Suu' al-Hifdh)**.
- **It does not differentiate between Hasan Li Dhatihi and Hasan Li Ghayrihi.**
- **It does not exclude weak narrations.**
    - A **Munqati' Hadith** (disconnected chain) could still fall into this definition.
- **It overlaps with Sahih Hadith.**

- Since **Sahih Hadith** also lacks narrators accused of lying and is not irregular, this definition does not sufficiently distinguish Hasan from Sahih.

Some scholars attempted to clarify **al-Tirmidhi's definition** by arguing that the phrase **"not accused of lying"** implies that **a narrator is of lower precision**, meaning it **falls below Sahih level**. However, this interpretation has also been criticized because **some weak Hadiths** may fit the definition **without being Hasan**.

The Contradiction in Al-Tirmidhi's Usage of Hasan and Gharib Together

Another issue raised is **al-Tirmidhi's contradiction** in labeling some **Hasan Hadiths as Gharib** (singularly transmitted), despite **his own requirement that a Hasan Hadith must have multiple chains**.

Al-Hafidh **al-'Iraqi** highlighted this contradiction in his *Alfiyyah*:

"Al-Tirmidhi said: A Hadith free from irregularity and without a narrator accused of lying, and it is not singular. But he sometimes grades a singular Hadith as Hasan."

This means **al-Tirmidhi's theoretical definition** of Hasan **does not always match his practical application** in *Jami' al-Tirmidhi*.

Definition of Hadith al-Gharib (The Strange Hadith)

The term *Hadith Gharib* (strange hadith) refers to a narration that is transmitted by a single narrator at any level of the chain of transmission (*isnad*), even if the rest of the chain includes multiple narrators. The key characteristic of a *gharib* hadith is the presence of singularity in narration at some point in the *isnad*.

Another Term for Hadith Gharib

Some scholars refer to *Hadith Gharib* as *Hadith Fard* (singular hadith) and consider the two terms interchangeable. However, other scholars differentiate between them, assigning distinct meanings to each. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani notes that while both terms are synonymous in linguistic and technical usage, *fard* is more commonly used for *absolute singularity* (*fard mutlaq*), whereas *gharib* is used more broadly, often referring to *relative singularity* (*fard nisbi*).

Types of Hadith Gharib

Scholars categorize *gharib* hadith into two types based on where the singularity occurs in the chain:

1. Absolute Strange Hadith (Gharib Mutlaq / Fard Mutlaq)

- **Definition:** This is a hadith in which only one narrator transmits the report directly from the Prophet ﷺ, with no other companions narrating it.
- **Example:**
    - The hadith of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه):
      "I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: 'Indeed, actions are judged by intentions, and each person will have what he intended…'"
    - This hadith is only known to be narrated by 'Umar ibn al-Khattab from the Prophet ﷺ, making it an example of *gharib mutlaq*.

2. Relative Strange Hadith (Gharib Nisbi / Fard Nisbi)

- **Definition:** This type of hadith is originally transmitted by multiple narrators, but at some later stage in the *isnad*, a single narrator uniquely transmits it, making it relatively strange.
- **Example:**
    - The hadith narrated by Malik from al-Zuhri, from Anas ibn Malik (رضي الله عنه), stating:
      "The Prophet ﷺ entered Makkah on the day of conquest while wearing a helmet. When he removed it, someone told him that Ibn Khatal was clinging to the Ka'bah's curtains. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Kill him.'"
    - Imam Malik is the only one who narrated this hadith from al-Zuhri, making it *gharib* at that particular stage in the chain.
- **Reason for the Name:**

- This hadith is called *gharib nisbi* because the singularity occurs in comparison to other narrators, not in the entire chain.

Forms of Uniqueness in Relative Strange Hadith

There are several ways in which singularity (*tafarrud*) can occur within *gharib nisbi* hadiths:

1. **A hadith narrated by a single narrator who is trustworthy**, such as: *"This hadith is only narrated by so-and-so, and he is reliable."*
2. **A hadith narrated by a specific narrator from a particular teacher**, even though others have narrated it through different chains. This is often expressed as: *"So-and-so uniquely narrated it from so-and-so."*
3. **A hadith narrated by narrators from a specific region**, such as: *"Only the people of Makkah narrated this hadith."*
4. **A hadith narrated exclusively by scholars from a particular region without a known precedent in other locations**, for example: *"This hadith is uniquely narrated by the scholars of Sham and not by those of Hijaz."*

Another Classification of Hadith Gharib

Based on whether the uniqueness occurs in the chain (*isnad*) or the text (*matn*), *gharib* hadith can be divided into:

1. **Hadith Gharib in both its chain and text** – where the singularity applies to both the transmission and the actual wording of the hadith.
2. **Hadith Gharib in its chain only** – where the hadith is transmitted through multiple chains, but one of its chains contains a singular narrator. This is often indicated by scholars such as al-Tirmidhi when they say: *"Gharib from this route."*

The Definition of "Hasan Sahih" According to Al-Tirmidhi

The term **"Hasan Sahih"** used by Imam **al-Tirmidhi** is one of the terms that has sparked extensive debate among scholars. It is not a common classification among other hadith scholars in the same exact wording. Scholars have differed in interpreting what he meant by combining these two descriptions, which necessitates examining his statements in *Al-Jami'* and comparing them with the principles of hadith terminology.

Ibn Rajab said in *Sharh 'Ilal al-Tirmidhi*:

> *"A group of scholars have attributed this classification to al-Tirmidhi alone, and there is no doubt that this classification became famous through him."*
> *(Sharh 'Ilal al-Tirmidhi – p. 574)*

The Interpretations of "Hasan Sahih" According to Al-Tirmidhi

Scholars have differed regarding what al-Tirmidhi meant by saying **"Hasan Sahih."** Several explanations have been given for this term:

1. If the Hadith Has More Than One Chain, One Might Be Hasan and the Other Sahih

Ibn al-Salah stated in *Muqaddimat 'Ulum al-Hadith*:

> *"When al-Tirmidhi combines Hasan and Sahih, he means that the hadith was narrated through two chains: one Hasan and the other Sahih."*

According to Ibn al-Salah, the phrase **Hasan Sahih** means that the hadith has been transmitted through two chains—one being Hasan and the other Sahih.

However, this interpretation has been criticized. Ibn Rajab objected:

> *"This is problematic because al-Tirmidhi often says: 'Hasan Sahih Gharib (we do not know it) except through this route.'"*
> *(Sharh 'Ilal al-Tirmidhi – p. 609)*

If the hadith were narrated through multiple chains, it would not be described as **Gharib** (strange).

Some later scholars responded to this issue by suggesting that a hadith may originally be **Gharib** but later spread through multiple chains from one of its narrators, whether he was a **Tabi'i** or someone after him. If:

- **All the chains are Sahih**, it is called **Sahih Gharib**.
- **All the chains are Hasan**, it is called **Hasan Gharib**.
- **Some chains are Sahih and some are Hasan**, it is called **Hasan Sahih Gharib**.

This interpretation is based on al-Tirmidhi's definition of **Hasan**, which he considers to be a hadith with multiple chains, with no accused narrators, and that is not **Shadh** (irregular). When he describes a hadith as **Hasan Gharib** or **Sahih Gharib**, it could be due to:

- **The multiple chains going back to one of its original narrators**, meaning that the hadith was originally **Gharib** but later became **Hasan** due to additional supporting chains.
- **The chain being Gharib** (i.e., known only through this specific route), but the text itself being Hasan because it has been reported through at least two different routes, as seen in al-Tirmidhi's frequent use of **"And in this regard, there is also a narration from so-and-so."** This indicates that there are supporting reports for the meaning of the hadith, making it Hasan despite the chain being Gharib.

However, this explanation is also questionable. Some researchers argue that it does not align with al-Tirmidhi's actual usage, especially when considering his wording and context.

Ibn Daqiq al-'Id's Objection

Ibn Daqiq al-'Id challenged this view, pointing out:

"Some hadiths are described as Hasan Sahih even though they have only one route and one source. The variation in chains is only considered in terms of their origins. This is evident in al-Tirmidhi's wording in many places where he says: 'This hadith is Hasan Sahih; we do not know it except through this route, or we do not know it except from the hadith of so-and-so.'"

(Al-Iqtirah fi Bayan al-Istilah – p. 10)

This indicates that Ibn al-Salah's interpretation is problematic, as al-Tirmidhi described some hadiths as **Hasan Sahih** even when they did not have multiple chains.

2. The Opinion That Al-Tirmidhi Meant "Hasan" in Its Linguistic Sense

Some have suggested that **al-Tirmidhi** intended the **linguistic meaning** of *Hasan*, which refers to something that the soul inclines toward and the heart does not reject, rather than the precise **technical meaning** used by hadith scholars.

Ibn Sayyid al-Nas commented on this view:

"This is even farther from the truth than the first interpretation, for every hadith of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is Hasan."

(Al-Nafh al-Shadhi fi Sharh Jami' al-Tirmidhi – p. 285)

3. Ibn Hajar's Explanation and Refutation

Ibn Hajar mentioned that some later scholars attempted to resolve the issue by saying:

"The description of 'Hasan Sahih' applies to a hadith depending on the status of its narrators according to different hadith scholars. If among the narrators there is someone whose hadith is considered Sahih by some and Hasan by others, then the hadith is labeled as such."

However, Ibn Hajar rejected this explanation, arguing:

"If al-Tirmidhi had intended this, he would have used the conjunction 'وَ' (and) for combination, saying 'Hasan and Sahih,' or he would have used 'أَوْ' (or) for uncertainty, saying

'Hasan or Sahih.' Furthermore, the most apparent understanding is that al-Tirmidhi is ruling on the hadith based on his own judgment, not based on the differing opinions of other scholars."

(Al-Nukat 'ala Kitab Ibn al-Salah – p. 477)

This opinion is weak because **when al-Tirmidhi describes a hadith as Hasan Sahih, he is issuing his own judgment based on his independent reasoning**, not merely noting a disagreement among hadith scholars. If he had meant to indicate a **difference of opinion**, he would have **explicitly clarified it** by using words that indicate **alternation** (*takhyir*) or **combination** (*jam'*).

4. **If a hadith has only one chain of narration, then his statement "Hasan Sahih" indicates his hesitation in classifying it as either Hasan or Sahih, as Al-Tirmidhi said in some places: *"We do not know it except from this route."***

5. **Imam Al-'Iraqi said in *Al-Taqyid wa Al-Idah*, and Al-Sakhawi mentioned it in his commentary on Al-'Iraqi's *Alfiyyah*:**

"Regarding Sahih Hasan, there are various views,
In all of them, flaws have appeared.
The answer lies in the diversity of chains,
For Hasan and Sahih are based on it,
Or in hesitation over the classification of the narrator..."

This means that **Al-Tirmidhi's combination of the two terms is due to the multiplicity of chains or hesitation in judgment.**

6. **Some of the later scholars said: Al-Tirmidhi meant by describing a hadith as "Hasan" that each of the three characteristics he mentioned—freedom of the chain from a discredited narrator, freedom from irregularity, and multiplicity of chains, even if they are weak—is sufficient to establish the description of Hasan according to him.**

The **validity of this interpretation has been examined**, as Al-Tirmidhi's **requirement for multiple chains, even if weak**, is **unacceptable to many scholars**, since **weak chains do not become stronger merely by their number, but rather require specific conditions for the hadith to be supported by them.**

Some scholars **refuted this interpretation**, stating that **Al-Tirmidhi does not label a weak hadith as Hasan merely due to its multiple chains, and no such case has been transmitted from him in his book.**

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned in *Majmu' al-Fatawa*:

"As for Hasan in the terminology of Al-Tirmidhi, it is what is narrated from two routes and does not have a narrator accused of lying, nor is it irregular and contradicting authentic hadiths. These are the conditions that Al-Tirmidhi stipulated for Hasan. However, some say that Hasan has been applied to what does not meet these conditions, such as a hadith he describes as Hasan Gharib, which was narrated from only one route, yet he still called it Hasan."

(Majmu' al-Fatawa, Vol. 18, pp. 39-40)

He then mentioned that **Al-Tirmidhi may consider a hadith Hasan if its chain is rare, but it has been narrated from the Tabi'i through multiple routes.**

7. **Some scholars said that Al-Tirmidhi applies the term *Hasan Sahih* to a hadith that he deems *Hasan* based on the reliability of its narrators, but it has risen to the level of *Sahih* because its narrators are at the highest levels of trustworthiness. Thus, Al-Tirmidhi combined both descriptions. Based on this, every Sahih hadith is also Hasan, but not every Hasan hadith is Sahih, which is why Al-Tirmidhi rarely separates the description of Sahih from Hasan.**

Based on this interpretation, **a Hasan hadith is one that falls short of the level of Sahih, because its narrators have not reached the level of accuracy and memorization of the narrators of Sahih hadiths.** These narrators belong to the **second tier of trustworthy narrators** mentioned by **Imam Muslim in the introduction to his Sahih**, and it was said that Muslim included their hadiths in *mutabaʿat* (supporting narrations). **This type of Hasan hadith is what Abu Dawood referred to when he said:**

"I included in my book the Sahih hadith, and what resembles it and comes close to it."

Types of Hasan Hadith According to Ibn al-Salah

Ibn al-Salah stated that **this interpretation of Hasan hadith is the view of Al-Khattabi, not that of Al-Tirmidhi.** He also explained that **Hasan hadith is divided into two types:**

- **Hasan according to Al-Tirmidhi:** A hadith **whose narrator is not accused of lying, nor excessively negligent in making mistakes, nor a person of open sinfulness.** Additionally, **its text is supported by another hadith**, thus removing it from being **irregular or rejected.**
- **Hasan according to Al-Khattabi:** A hadith **narrated by men known for honesty and trustworthiness but who did not reach the level of the narrators of Sahih hadith** due to **falling short in precision and memorization.** It must also **not be irregular, rejected, or defective.**

8. **Some of the later scholars held that Hasan Sahih according to Al-Tirmidhi is a rank below pure Sahih (*Sahih Mufrad*). Thus, if Al-Tirmidhi says about a hadith that it is "Sahih," it indicates a firm judgment of its authenticity without any hesitation. However, if he says *"Hasan Sahih,"* it means that the hadith contains an element of Sahih and an element of Hasan—it is not purely Sahih, but rather Hasan mixed with Sahih.**

They compared this to **some foods that combine two flavors**, such as describing something as **"sweet and sour"** because it has both sweetness and sourness combined.

However, **this interpretation is very weak,** because **Al-Tirmidhi uses the combination of Hasan and Sahih even for many hadiths that are unanimously agreed upon as authentic** and whose **chains of transmission are among the highest levels of authenticity.** Examples include:

- **Malik narrating from Nafiʿ from Ibn ʿUmar**
- **Al-Zuhri narrating from Salim from his father**

In fact, Al-Tirmidhi rarely separates Sahih from Hasan, and it is **not necessarily the case that a hadith he labels only as "Sahih" is stronger than one he describes as "Hasan Sahih."**

Ibn Rajab said in *Sharh ʿIlal al-Tirmidhi*:

"The hadiths he classified as only Sahih are not necessarily stronger than those he labeled as Hasan Sahih."

(Sharh ʿIlal al-Tirmidhi, p. 610)

Discussion on Al-Tirmidhi's Leniency in Authenticating and Grading Hadiths

Al-Dhahabi mentioned in *Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl*:

"The scholars do not rely on Al-Tirmidhi's authentication."

(Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl – Vol. 3, p. 407)

Al-Albani stated in *al-Silsilah al-Ḍaʿīfah* (1/85) that **Al-Tirmidhi sometimes shows leniency in authenticating hadiths**, but **most of what he deems authentic is indeed authentic.** Therefore, if **Al-Tirmidhi declares a hadith authentic and no other hadith critics oppose him, his authentication is accepted.** However, **if major scholars such as Ahmad, Al-Bukhari, or Muslim disagree with him, their opinion takes precedence over his.**

Conclusion

The scholars who came after **Imam Al-Tirmidhi differed in interpreting his term "Hasan Sahih."** Some **attempted to determine its meaning,** while others **rejected certain interpretations attributed to him,** such as the claim that **a hadith could be Hasan through one chain and Sahih through another.**

This view was problematic because **Al-Tirmidhi applied this term to rare (gharib) hadiths**, leading **Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd** to reject this understanding as **inconsistent with Al-Tirmidhi's methodology in authentication.**

Based on this, **the term "Hasan Sahih" is a unique classification used by Al-Tirmidhi**, and **no precise explanation of how he applied it has been transmitted from him.** However, **the general understanding is that it signifies the acceptance and authenticity of a hadith, whether Hasan or Sahih.**

Ibn Rajab pointed out that **a hadith classified by Al-Tirmidhi as "Hasan Sahih" is not necessarily weaker than one he describes as only "Sahih."** He said:

"A hadith that he classifies only as Sahih is not necessarily stronger than one he labels as Hasan Sahih."

This indicates that **Al-Tirmidhi viewed the combination of "Hasan" and "Sahih" as a mark of a hadith's authenticity and strength, even if its chains varied in degree.**

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لا إِلَهَ إِلا أَنْتَ ، أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ

كتبه الفقير إلى ربه: